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October 29, 2003

Mr. Eric Stoner
USAID Environmental Advisor
American Embassy - Brasilia
APO AA 34030

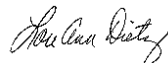
Dear Eric,

Enclosed please find the semi-annual technical progress report on World Wildlife Fund's activities in support of Grant #512-G-00-96-00041, covering the period of June 15, 2003 through September 30, 2003. As we discussed with you in Brasilia earlier this year, WWF is applying the funds remaining in this grant to activities that are part of the Brazilian World Heritage Biodiversity Program conducted in partnership with UNESCO and the Brazilian Ministry of the Environment. WWF's work is focused on improving the conservation of biodiversity in two World Heritage Sites – Atlantic Forest Southeast Reserves and Iguaçu National Park. We have organized this report according to the Brazilian World Heritage Biodiversity Program reporting format designed by UNESCO and it is our hope that this format will provide you with the information you need. Please let me know if you have questions or need additional information or clarification. We have attached as annexes the press releases from WWF-Brazil, WWF-US, and the Fundación Vida Silvestre Argentina regarding the recent invasion of Iguaçu National Park aimed at reopening a road that divides the Park in two. One goal of our project is to eliminate this long-standing conflict between the Park and the surrounding community by better integrating the community in the benefits the Park provides.

We also wanted to brief you on the status of the project with UNESCO and the Brazilian Government. As we have discussed, USAID's contribution to the WWF portion of this project is intended to generate the additional benefit of a 1:1 match by the United Nations Foundation. Because of a number of factors within the Ministry of Environment, the Brazilian government (ABC) has not yet approved the overall project. At a meeting today, the Ministry of Environment officials assured WWF-Brazil staff that all the procedures for ABC approval have now been correctly completed and that the project will be approved. However, a realistic estimate of the time needed to have all agreements signed by the ABC and Ministry of the Environment is 40 days. The United Nations Foundation will not approve the project until after formal ABC approval of the project. WWF has already initiated implementation of actions as described in this report, and Helena Maltez, the WWF-Brazil staff member coordinating implementation of this project, will be contacting you in Brasilia to discuss the situation in more detail.

If you have any questions about the enclosed report, please feel free to discuss them with Helena or to contact me directly.

Sincerely,



Lou Ann Dietz for
Meg Symington, Ph.D.
Director for Latin America

cc: Philip Tresch
Rosa Lemos de Sá
Helena Maltez
Lee Zahnow

Brazilian World Heritage Biodiversity Program (First Phase)
Year 1 Activities conducted by WWF-Brazil during the period June 15, 2003 – September 30, 2003

Atlantic Forest Southeast Reserves World Heritage Site

B1 - Development of strategic plans necessary for the improvement of the efficiency and effectiveness of existing conservation actions

B1.3 - Establishment of conditions for integrated management of the Sites with the surrounding ecoregion at

<i>Planned Activities:</i>	<i>Activities carried out this reporting period:</i>	<i>Status of specific planned outcomes and/or products:</i>
1. Contract a specialist responsible for the coordination of WWF-Brazil activities in the Southeast Reserves Site	Luciana Lopes Simões was hired to coordinate WWF activities at the Southern Reserves Site. Luciana is based at WWF-Brazil's office in São Paulo. A forest engineer, Luciana completed her Masters Degree at Wageningen University in the Netherlands focused on Tropical Forest Conservation and Management. She previously worked for the Atlantic Forest Biosphere Reserve and the NGO SOS Mata Atlântica.	Ongoing: A Serra do Mar Ecoregion Coordinator was hired by WWF-Brazil to lead all WWF-Brazil activities for the Southeast Reserves World Heritage Site.
2. Participate in the Advisory Committees and Working Groups planned in the general Brazilian World Heritage Biodiversity Program.	Some political and bureaucratic constraints in the Brazilian government have delayed the beginning of the project. WWF has conducted several meetings with the Federal Environment Ministry and UNESCO in order to hasten the project's beginning. The situation will be definitively resolved by October 30 th . A meeting of all project partners will occur on October 23 with Marc Patry, of UNESCO-Paris to define final procedures to start the project.	Ongoing: The WWF-Brazil Atlantic Forest Coordinator is already participating in the National Coordination of the Project. The WWF-Brazil Serra do Mar Ecoregion Coordinator is participating in the Local Implementation Group of the Southeast Reserve Sites, contributing to discussions and decisions on priorities, detailed workplans and budget adjustments.
3. Integrate WWF-Brazil activities in the context of the general Brazilian World Heritage Biodiversity Program.	In spite of the delay in starting the overall project, WWF-Brazil has already begun to develop the project activities in its workplan, as described in this report.	Ongoing: All activities carried out directly by WWF-Brazil are integrated with the general project objectives and activities. Information and reports of these activities are routinely sent to the National Coordinating Unit and to the National Technical Coordination Unit of the Brazilian World Heritage Biodiversity Program.
4. Develop a socio-economic and biological assessment of the Serra do Mar ecoregion – compiling available information, including georeferenced data (vegetation, conservation units, rivers and streams, highways, cities,	1. Three consultants, experts in socio-economic, biological and Geographic Information Systems have been identified and are already developing to develop the assessment. Their terms of reference include: to survey all available information, to compile all this information and present it in a comprehensive system at a workshop with regional stakeholders, and to discuss with the WWF-Brazil team the use of this	On track: A georeferenced socio-economic and biological assessment of the Serra do Mar Ecoregion is available emphasizing the Southeast Reserves Sites.

etc.) emphasizing the Southeast Reserves Site and the surrounding area	<p>information for strategic ecoregion planning.</p> <p>2, We obtained updated (most recent data available to date) forest cover data for the Serra do Mar Ecoregion from the SOS Mata Atlântica Foundation.</p> <p>3. Georeferenced data for federal and state protected areas were requested from IBAMA and the state environment secretariats and will be soon available.</p>	
5. Develop a methodology for analysis of opportunities and threats to biodiversity conservation	This methodology will be discussed during the first workshop of regional stakeholders (November 25-26).	On track: A methodology to analyze opportunities and threats to biodiversity conservation in the Serra do Mar Ecoregion is developed based on the previous experience developing the Upper Parana Ecoregion Biodiversity Vision.
6. Conduct analyses of opportunities and threats for the conservation of the biodiversity of the Serra do Mar Ecoregion	Analyses will be conducted after the first workshop (November 25-26) and all data collection are completed.	On track: Analyses of opportunities and threats to biodiversity conservation are available for the Serra do Mar Ecoregion, emphasizing the Southeast Reserves Sites.
7. Identify and select stakeholders to become involved in the process	We identified a preliminary list of key stakeholders to invite to participate in the first workshop (November 25-26). This list contains about 50 non-governmental, private sector, and governmental organizations working on conservation issues in the Serra do Mar Ecoregion. Because there are hundreds of organizations in this region, we decided to invite only those that have a regional approach and medium- to long-term experience working in the Atlantic Forest.	Complete: All important stakeholders working with biodiversity and conservation issues at the scale of the Serra do Mar Ecoregion and Southeast Reserves Site are identified.
8. Organize, facilitate and complete a report for two workshops for stakeholders of the ecoregion – 1 workshop to present the proposal and ask for information and 1 workshop to present the preliminary results of the threats and opportunities analysis	<p>During the Vision development process WWF will organize three workshops. The third one was added to the original plan so as to present the final version of the Vision and discuss its implementation and monitoring.</p> <p>The first workshop will occur on November, 25 and 26 in the city of São Paulo. About 50 non-governmental, private-sector, and governmental organizations working on conservation issues in the Serra do Mar Ecoregion will be invited. The main activities planned are: (i) to present the WWF Ecoregion Conservation approach and explain the Ecoregion Strategic Planning Process and the final product, the Vision; (ii) to present and discuss a preliminary assessment of biological and socio-economic data; (iii) to discuss and agree on a methodology for analysis of opportunities and threats to biodiversity conservation; and (iv) to discuss and select potential criteria to be used in the analysis of opportunities and</p>	<p>On track: Two workshops are held involving stakeholders identified for the Serra do Mar Ecoregion and Southeast Reserves Site biodiversity conservation.</p> <p>Preliminary results of the threats and opportunities analysis are presented to the stakeholders.</p> <p>Discussions and conclusions obtained at the workshops are recorded.</p>

	threats to biodiversity conservation. A preliminary meeting with all consultants and WWF-Brazil staff will occur during the first week of November to discuss available data and prepare the workshop presentations.	
9. Identify partnerships for further steps	Based on the results of the three workshops, WWF-Brazil will identify organizations for further partnerships aiming at implementing the Vision	

Iguaçu National Park World Heritage Site

B1 - Development of strategic plans necessary for the improvement of the efficiency and effectiveness of existing conservation actions

B1.3 - Establishment of conditions for integrated management of the Iguaçu National Park site with the surrounding ecoregion

<i>Planned Activities:</i>	<i>Activities carried out this reporting period:</i>	<i>Status of specific planned outcomes and/or products:</i>
1. Develop a plan for the dissemination of the Biodiversity Vision of the Upper Paraná Atlantic Forest	<p>A meeting was held with all the WWF Tri-national Atlantic Forest Team to discuss a plan for the dissemination of the Biodiversity Vision (requirements for long-term conservation of biodiversity and ecological processes at the ecoregion scale) of the Upper Paraná Atlantic Forest. Participants were: Lou Ann Dietz (WWF-US), Lucy Aquino (WWF-US Office in Paraguay, Guillermo Placci and Mario Di Bitteti (Fundación de la Vida Silvestre Argentina – FVSA, a WWF Associate) and Helena Maltez and Rebeca Kritsch (WWF-Brazil). The team agreed on a strategy for dissemination, outlining target audiences and the communications products to be produced.</p> <p>Three communication products will each be produced in three languages (English, Spanish and Portuguese):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - an Executive Summary – using colloquial language and a friendly design, with pictures and graphics. The target public will be local stakeholders, decision makers, universities, NGOs and protected area managers. - a poster with a map of the target Conservation Landscape (a tri-national forest corridor) to be disseminated throughout the ecoregion in schools, government offices, NGOs, parks, libraries, etc. The objective is to establish a common sense of location of the Ecoregion and the main features of the Vision (tri-national corridor), core areas for strict protection and main corridors connecting them where forest cover must be maintained, in order to obtain popular support for activities to achieve the Vision. - a CD containing the complete technical document of the Vision, the Executive Summary and the poster map will be distributed to partner organizations and individuals who were directly involved in the Vision development and are involved in activities to achieve it. 	Complete: A strategy to launch and disseminate the Upper Parana Biodiversity Vision has been developed.
2. Produce all dissemination material for the Vision: text, poster/map, executive	During the reporting period the full version of the Vision (which was originally written in English) was translated to Portuguese and Spanish. The WWF	On track.: Communication products for the Upper Paraná

summary	technical team is reviewing these translations. A draft of the Executive Summary document for decision makers was also written in Portuguese and is being reviewed by WWF communication staff.	Biodiversity Vision will soon be published: Full Technical Document, Executive Summary, and Poster/Map in two different formats: paper and CD-Rom.
3. Conduct technical meetings with stakeholders who participated in the development of the Vision	<p>A printed version of the complete Vision technical document was sent to key Brazilian institutions and individuals who participated in its development: Wanderlei de Moraes of the Itaipu Binational Company, Cláudio Pádua of IPÊ (Institute for Ecology Research and Studies), and the Iguaçu National Park staff (Julio Gonchorovsky, Jorge Pegoraro and Ivan Batiston). These people were contacted by telephone and received the document by postal mail. We also gave this document to other important stakeholders in the implementation of the Vision, such as WWF-Network sponsors (WWF-Finland), and potential partners such as EMBRAPA (the Brazilian Institute for Agriculture Research), MST (Landless People Movement) and APOENA (a local NGO).</p> <p>Meetings will be held shortly to present and discuss the Vision document with the NGO SPVS (Society for Wildlife Protection) and the Paraná State Environment Institute.</p>	On track. WWF-Brazil staff are visiting stakeholders who participated in the development of the Vision to discuss the document and future efforts.
4. Organize a seminar on the Tri-national Atlantic Forest Corridor – including a congress of scientific papers resulting from work in the ecoregion, discussion of the creation of a Trinational Corridor, launching and presentation of the Vision, discussion of the implementation of priority actions to achieve the Vision	<p>The Seminar will be held December 4 – 6 with Brazilian stakeholders. A partnership was established with APOENA, which will organize the event together with WWF. At this moment we are finalizing the agenda that will include some of the following themes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Conservation, research, and management of biodiversity flow (individuals, pollen, seeds, genes, etc.) developed in the Upper Paraná Atlantic Forest Ecoregion by universities, Itaipu Binacional Company, NGOs and state government Institutes; - How different types of legal protection status, such as protected areas, Biosphere Reserves, World Heritage Sites, contribute to effective conservation; - How to create and promote a legally recognized Tri-national Corridor; - The role of social movements as threats or partners for conservation. <p>The Vision communication products (Executive Summary, CD and Map) will be launched at the event, and WWF will make a presentation to initiate discussion of strategies for the Vision's implementation.</p>	On track: A seminar to launch the Upper Parana Biodiversity Vision communication products and to discuss the implementation of priority actions will be organized. Upper Parana Ecoregion stakeholders share experience in biodiversity conservation and sustainable development.
5. Disseminate materials and information about the Vision	Will occur after the Vision launching.	On track: Upper Paraná Biodiversity Vision communication products will be sent to all strategic policy makers, regional governmental and non governmental organizations as well

		as to schools, libraries, etc.
6. Assess capacity building needs of target audiences	WWF established a partnership with the Atlantic Forest Biosphere Reserve to develop this activity. We identified as target audiences the State Committees of the Atlantic Forest Biosphere Reserve. These Committees are composed of governmental, non-governmental and private organizations and are key players in addressing conservation issues in the World Heritage Site region. They will have a strong relationship with this project, but it is clear that there is a huge lack of capacity on conservation issues. We are identifying capacity building needs in order to strengthen these Committees and improve their skills to act proactively for Atlantic Forest Conservation.	On track. Capacity building needs of target audience will be assessed by WWF-Brazil staff together with the National Technical Coordination and the Local Executing Group aiming at contributing to the general project objectives.
7. Develop content of training courses	Will be developed during the coming weeks in partnership with the Atlantic Forest Biosphere Reserve.	On track: Key issues will be identified and methodologies will be developed and/or adapted in order to address the capacity building needs identified previously. Based on the issues identified, contents for training courses will be developed.
8. Develop a proposal for implementation of the training courses (staff, infrastructure, data, etc.)	This activity will be developed in the next semester.	On track: An agenda, program and strategy for the training courses implementation will be developed.
9. Organize and implement at least one training course based on the proposal developed	This activity will be developed in the next semester	On track: At least one training course will be organized.

B2 - Identification and putting in place the necessary instruments for the correction of situations that pose immediate risks to the conservation of biodiversity

B2.3 - Pilot Project for forest landscape restoration in the Iguazu National Park buffer zone

<i>Planned Activities:</i>	<i>Activities carried out this reporting period:</i>	<i>Status of specific planned outcomes and/or products:</i>
1. Contract a specialist to coordinate this activity	The specialist will only be contracted after the identification of the area to implement the forest restoration pilot project. This strategy will be adopted to ensure that this person profile fit at maximum with the site specificity.	On track: A specialist will be hired to coordinate this activity.

<p>2. Identify an area to implement the forest restoration pilot project</p>	<p>Two potential areas were identified based on the Upper Paraná Biodiversity Vision: the Municipality of Capanema in the buffer zone of the Iguaçu National Park and the buffer zone of a large forest block, owned by the Araupel company, on the Iguaçu River. The land in Capanema is totally privately owned by medium-size landowners, whose main economic activity is soybean plantations. Satellite images of the entire region suggest that almost all riparian forests and the 20% forest reserves required on private properties by the Brazilian Forest Code Law have been destroyed. The main focus of a forest landscape restoration (FLR) action in this region will thus have to target restoration of the 20% reserves and the riparian forests to comply with the law as well as to restore forest connectivity with the Iguaçu National Park. A consultant has been identified and will be contacted to develop a field survey to identify potential partners and field areas for the FLR project. At the same time, this consultant will be asked to analyze the viability of a FLR project in this area.</p> <p>The Araupel-owned forest block and the Iguaçu National Park are two of the four fragments larger than 10,000ha of Upper Paraná Atlantic Forest remaining in Brazil. In the Araupel block, WWF has already supported the creation of a 5,500 ha Private Reserve of Natural Heritage. About 12,000 hectares of this block remain unprotected. This is a unique and precious forest, probably the last remnant of transition forest among the semi deciduous and the Araucaria moist forests. This area has been seriously threatened by systematic invasions of landless people. As a consequence, the National Institute for Agrarian Reform (INCRA) decided to buy 25,000 ha belonging to the Araupel Company to establish a land settlement for 1,500 families of landless people. This situation represents both a huge threat for biodiversity and an opportunity to develop a fantastic project to establish a model for land settlement sustainable management. We contacted the Brazilian Land Reform Agency (INCRA), the Brazilian Agricultural Research Agency (EMBRAPA) and the Landless People's Movement (MST) with the objective of establishing a partnership to support a project for sustainable use and forest protection in this new land settlement. As a result, WWF was invited to establish a partnership for the planning the land settlement, capacity building and technical assistance on biodiversity conservation issues. As a counterpart, INCRA committed to create a 9,000 ha Private Reserve of Natural Heritage to protect the forest within the land settlement. WWF will negotiate with Araupel and IBAMA to promote the creation of a mosaic of protected areas in this region and some type of strict protection for the remaining 3,000ha of unprotected forest owned by Araupel.</p>	<p>Complete: Potential areas to implement a forest restoration project were identified based on the Upper Paraná Atlantic Forest Biodiversity Vision.</p> <p>On track: Criteria will be developed to select the site for a forest restoration project.</p> <p>On track: Field visits will be conducted to the identified sites.</p> <p>On track: An area to implement a forest restoration project will be selected based on the criteria previously developed.</p>
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3. Identify partners to implement the pilot FLR project (NGO, university)	<p>Three potential partners were identified to establish a Pilot Project on Forest Landscape Restoration at the area surrounding Araupel:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. National Institute for Agrarian Reform (INCRA) 2. Brazilian Institute for Agriculture Research (EMBRAPA) 3. Landless People Movement (MST) <p>An expert on forest conservation and agrarian reform issues was identified to be hired as a consultant to work on this specific activity.</p>	<p>On track: All potential partners related to the potential FLR project sites are being contacted.</p> <p>On track: Partners will be identified according to the selected area to implement a forest restoration project.</p>
4. Discuss and design the technical model for restoration	This activity will begin during the following weeks.	On track: Technical models for forest restoration are discussed and developed.
5. Develop a monitoring and evaluation system for the pilot project	This activity will begin during the following weeks.	<p>On track: A participatory system to monitor and evaluate the pilot project will be developed.</p> <p>On-track: Activities to be developed during the first year project will be selected.</p> <p>On-track: A timetable will be established for the development of all activities.</p>
6. Implement the pilot FLR project	The implementation of the pilot project will start in year 2. This first year will be dedicated to surveys, planning and establishing partnerships.	Year 2: First phase of the forest restoration project implementation will be implemented based on the timetable previously established
7. Assess capacity building needs of target audiences (themes: forest restoration, environmental education, and ecotourism)	This activity will begin during the following weeks.	On track: Capacity building needs of target audience will be assessed by WWF-Brazil staff together with the National Technical Coordination and the Local Executing Group aiming at contributing to the general project objectives.

8. Develop content of training courses	This activity will begin during the following weeks.	On track: Key issues will be identified and methodologies developed and/or adapted in order to address the capacity building needs identified previously. Based on the issues identified, contents for training courses will be developed.
9. Develop a proposal for implementation of the training courses (staff, infrastructure, data, etc.)	This activity will begin during the following weeks.	On track: An agenda, program and implementation strategy for the training courses will be developed.
10. Organize and implement at least one training course based on the proposal developed	This activity begin in the next semester.	On track: At least one training course will be organized.

B2 - New Activity: Development of a strategy to build local community support for maintaining closure of the road (*Estrada do Colono*) dividing the Iguaçu National Park in two.

The Iguaçu National Park is the largest forest block and largest strictly protected Area of the Upper Paraná Ecoregion remaining in Brazil. It forms a central connection of a trans-border forest corridor in Brazil, Paraguay, and Argentina that is crucial to maintaining the biodiversity of the entire ecoregion. In October 2003, 300 members of the local communities invaded the park with bulldozers and reopened a road (called the *Estrada do Colono*) crossing the park. Closed two years before, this road divides the Park in two and has been the subject of a long-term conflict with the local community. Because of this road UNESCO had declared the Park a “World Heritage Site in Peril”. This status was removed when the road was definitively closed in 2001. One objective of this Brazilian World Heritage Biodiversity Program is to integrate the surrounding community into the management strategy to assure that the community derives economic benefit from preserving the biodiversity of the Park. The Park management has never had the resources to undertake work outside its borders in the surrounding community. Unfortunately, delays in the Brazilian government approval of this Brazilian World Heritage Biodiversity Program have prevented work from beginning, and the community/park conflict has increased. These people argue that the road closure obliged them to travel a huge distance to sell their agricultural products. The federal police removed the invaders from the Park, but the conflict is far from resolved. As this issue is really key for the protection of this Heritage Site, WWF in coordination with IBAMA, will include an additional activity in this workplan - a study of the environmental and social impacts of the Colono Road. Work on this study will begin immediately, and the results will be used as a basis to begin discussions with the local community to develop economic alternatives compatible with the preservation of the biodiversity of the park. (See annexed press releases and letter to the president of Brazil).

Expected Specific Outcomes and/or Products: A study providing a technical basis for a strategy to maintain closure of the Colono Road as well as for the development of environmentally friendly economic alternatives for the surrounding communities.

Annexes:

1. WWF-Brazil Press Release and letter to the President of Brazil
2. WWF-US Press Release
3. Fundación Vida Silvestre Argentina Press Release



WWF-Brasil

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Release

Liberação imediata – 07/10/2003

WWF-Brasil repudia abertura da Estrada do Colono e pede providências

Invasão do Parque Nacional do Iguaçu preocupa ambientalistas, que exigem ação imediata do Governo Federal com a retirada dos invasores e fechamento definitivo da via que corta a unidade de conservação

Brasília – Foi com surpresa e indignação que a organização ambientalista WWF-Brasil foi informada a respeito da invasão do Parque Nacional do Iguaçu (PR) por um grupo de cerca de 300 pessoas no último dia 4 de outubro. Preocupam o WWF-Brasil não só a invasão e a destruição do posto local do Instituto Brasileiro de Meio Ambiente e Recursos Naturais Renováveis (Ibama), mas principalmente a abertura da Estrada do Colono, uma via de 18 quilômetros que cruzava a unidade de conservação e que estava fechada desde 2001 por ser considerada uma ameaça à integridade do Parque. Por esta razão, a entidade vai enviar carta de repúdio e pedido de esclarecimento à Presidência da República e à Casa Civil.

Assim como toda a comunidade ambientalista, o WWF-Brasil solicita das autoridades uma providência em relação a este impasse, que ameaça a integridade de uma área-chave para a conservação ambiental da Mata Atlântica do Brasil. A entidade considera essencial uma ação imediata oficial para reverter a situação e garantir um fechamento definitivo da estrada. A solicitação está embasada não só em aspectos biológicos inquestionáveis, mas nos legais, já que o Sistema Nacional de Unidades de Conservação (SNUC) proíbe a presença de rodovias em parques e reservas.

No passado, a Estrada do Colono foi fechada algumas vezes por ser considerada uma ameaça à biodiversidade local do Parque, que é uma das mais importantes áreas de proteção integral do país e foi declarada Sítio do Patrimônio Mundial Natural pela Unesco. O Iguaçu resguarda um dos maiores remanescentes protegidos da Floresta Atlântica brasileira e é um dos poucos locais ecologicamente viáveis para a conservação de inúmeras espécies de fauna e flora ameaçadas de extinção. Sua relevância biológica e cênica, no entanto, não conteve a ação de invasores apoiados pelo Partido dos Trabalhadores (PT) do Paraná. De acordo com a equipe que trabalha no Parque, os invasores romperam as cercas e destruíram a base de pesquisa e monitoramento do Ibama sem que fosse possível qualquer resistência ou diálogo.

O WWF-Brasil atua na Mata Atlântica desde 1971, quando iniciou seu apoio ao projeto de conservação do mico-leão-dourado. No momento, a entidade planeja, em parceria com o Ibama, ações de capacitação e implementação do ecoturismo como fonte de renda alternativa às comunidades do entorno do Parque Nacional do Iguaçu.



O WWF-Brasil é uma organização da sociedade civil autônoma e sem fins lucrativos dedicada à conservação da natureza, reconhecida pelo governo como instituição de utilidade pública.

Para mais informações:

Jorge Fecuri – Assessor de Comunicação Tel (61)364.7485 email: jorge@wwf.org.br
WWF-Brasil

Este press release pode ser encontrado no
endereço www.wwf.org.br



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Brasília, 7 de outubro de 2003

Excelentíssimo Sr. Luís Inácio Lula da Silva
Presidente da República Federativa do Brasil

Praça dos Três Poderes
Palácio do Planalto
Brasília – DF

C/C

Excelentíssimo. Sr. José Dirceu
Ministro-chefe da Casa Civil

Foi com surpresa e apreensão que o WWF-Brasil acompanhou a invasão do Parque Nacional do Iguaçu (PR) e a abertura da Estrada do Colono no último dia 4 de outubro. Preocupam não só a invasão e a destruição do posto local do Instituto Brasileiro de Meio Ambiente e Recursos Naturais Renováveis (Ibama), construído com o auxílio financeiro do WWF, mas, principalmente, a abertura da Estrada, uma via que estava fechada desde 2001 por ser considerada uma ameaça à integridade do Parque.

Em consonância com toda a comunidade ambientalista, o WWF-Brasil solicita uma providência em relação a este impasse, que ameaça a integridade de uma área-chave para a conservação ambiental da Mata Atlântica do Brasil. Consideramos essencial uma ação imediata oficial para reverter a situação e garantir um fechamento definitivo da estrada. Importante ressaltar que esta solicitação está embasada não só em aspectos biológicos únicos, mas também nos legais, já que o Sistema Nacional de Unidades de Conservação (SNUC) proíbe a presença de rodovias em parques e reservas brasileiros.

No passado, a Estrada do Colono foi fechada algumas vezes por ser considerada uma ameaça à biodiversidade local do Parque, que é uma das mais importantes áreas de proteção integral do país. O Iguaçu resguarda um dos maiores remanescentes protegidos da Floresta Atlântica brasileira e é um dos poucos locais ecologicamente viáveis para a conservação de inúmeras espécies de fauna e flora ameaçadas de extinção. Sua relevância biológica e cênica, no entanto, não conteve a ação de invasores nem a abertura da Estrada.

O WWF-Brasil atua na Mata Atlântica desde 1971, quando iniciou seu apoio ao projeto de conservação do mico-leão-dourado. Respalado por seu histórico de contribuição à conservação deste importante bioma e visando o fim de algumas das ameaças à integridade do Parque Nacional do Iguaçu, solicitamos vossa atenção.

Respeitosamente,

Denise Hamú
Secretária Geral do WWF-Brasil



WWF-US
World Wildlife Fund

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News Release –

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Iguaçu National Park Under Threat Again

Washington – WWF condemns the violent invasion of the Iguaçu National Park in Brazil and the unlawful attempt to reopen a road crossing the area. Sometime in the past week, a group of 300 people invaded the park with bulldozers, breaking down fences and destroying the local post of IBAMA, the Brazilian Environmental Agency, as they tried to reopen the 11.2 mile “Estrada do Colono” (Colonists’ Road), closed in 2001 because of its threat to the biological integrity of the park

“This misguided action threatens the park, its ecological health and millions of people who benefit from the services it provides,” said Guillermo Castilleja, WWF Vice President for Latin America and the Caribbean.

Reopening the road would divide the park in two, interrupting a tri-national forest corridor that connects with the largest remaining block of Atlantic Forest, one of the most biologically important and threatened ecosystems in the world. Nearly 28 million people living in the surrounding region benefit from the forest’s ecological services, such as watershed protection and hydro-electric power. The scenic beauty of the Iguaçu Park also provides the foundation for the regional economy.

The impact of the recent action goes far beyond the Iguaçu National Park. In all, the forest connection of the tri-national corridor is essential to maintaining and restoring the biodiversity and ecological health of two natural World Heritage Sites, two UNESCO Biosphere Reserves, two national parks, and several provincial parks and private reserves. “These important places cannot survive as isolated forest fragments,” added Castilleja. “A road must not be allowed to sever the lifeline to the region’s health and prosperity.”

The “Colonists’ Road” has been closed several times because it is considered a threat to the local biodiversity of the Iguaçu National Park, site of the world famous Iguaçu Falls shared with Argentina and a UNESCO World Heritage Site. The 658 square mile park is one of the largest protected areas of Atlantic Forest remaining in Brazil and virtually the only remnant of the forest that once covered the western part of the Brazilian states of Paraná, São Paulo, Santa Catarina, and Rio Grande do Sul. It is one of the few areas still ecologically viable for the conservation of many endangered species of flora and fauna such as jaguars.



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WWF demands immediate action by government authorities to close once and for all the road that divides the Iguaçu National Park, and threatens the integrity of a key area for the conservation of the Atlantic Forest of Brazil.

WWF has been actively involved in the Atlantic Forest since 1971, supporting the conservation of the golden lion tamarin. Along with partners in Brazil, Argentina and Paraguay, WWF recently completed an analysis of needs essential to ensuring the long-term conservation of the biodiversity of the Upper Paraná Atlantic Forest. In Brazil, WWF is planning a new initiative together with IBAMA and UNESCO, to work with landowners and local communities to build capacity and promote ecotourism that would protect the forest and generate alternative income for the communities surrounding the Iguaçu National Park.

“If the park is harmed, the best hopes of the region suffer too,” Castilleja adds.

World Wildlife Fund, known worldwide by its panda logo, leads international efforts to protect the diversity of life on earth. Now in its fourth decade, WWF works in more than 100 countries around the globe.

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NEWS RELEASE

An attempt to reopen an old road that crosses the Iguazu National Park threatens the efforts of making real a Trinational Corridor which would ensure the survival of the Upper Paraná Atlantic Forest.

Fundación Vida Silvestre Argentina ask for a definitive solution for the conflict that occurred in Iguazu National Park which is endangering the future of the Trinational Green Corridor

On October 4th a group of 300 people intended to reopen “Colonist’s Road”. This route was closed in 2001 because it divided the park into two parts and put in risk the integrity of this protected area. For Fundación Vida Silvestre Argentina (FVSA) this conflict shows, once again, that a common strategy for managing transboundary protected areas is needed. This is an invaluable action for conserving the Upper Paraná Atlantic Forest Ecoregion, considered one of the most biologically diverse and endangered regions of the world.

On Tuesday the people agreed to leave the park spontaneously and began negotiations with IBAMA (Brazilian federal environment agency in charge of managing the park). Since then, different NGOs of Argentina, Brazil and Paraguay are following the evolution of this problem very closely, aiming for a quick and permanent solution.

Reopening the Colonist’s Road not only threatens the integrity of Iguazu National Park – which together with Argentine Iguazú National Park was declared a World Heritage Site. This situation also attempts to disrupt the necessary connectivity between this park and the Misiones’s Green Corridor in Argentina. These protected areas of both countries together with others from Paraguay are priority for achieving a Trinational Corridor. This path will allow the permanence of what still remains of the Upper Parana Atlantic Forest, only about 7 per cent of its original area.

Conserving this forest not only means to maintain a richness that is invaluable in itself, but also ensures the long - term viability of innumerable species that live only in this ecoregion. Furthermore, its survival guarantees crucial ecological roles that forests play and gives alternatives for social improvement of local communities.

Forests give us many critical environmental services such as regulation of climatic changes, maintenance of soil and water quality, and reduction of air pollution. Beyond their current economic contribution, such as the provided through ecotourism projects, protected areas offer to local communities a variety of productive alternatives that have yet to be explored.

The survival of the Upper Parana Atlantic Forest and all its benefits may depend to a large extent on the commitment of three countries to ensure the connectivity of the forest remnants of the three countries.

Since 1995 WWF-Brazil, WWF-Paraguay, and FVSA have led a tri-national participatory process involving more than 40 local organizations from the three countries. These represent multiple sectors and disciplines to coordinate policies on conservation and sustainable use. As a result of this joint effort, a document is about to be released, which will contribute to implement land use plans, including adequate space for wildlife set aside from human activities.

This shared work also identifies areas in need of protection; biological corridors for maintaining forest connectivity and sustainable use areas. The implementation of this project may foster opportunities for both economic development of local communities and for conservation of the natural environment.

Puerto Iguazú, 9th of October 2003

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